

**DECISION MEMO**  
**SWCOTV COMMUNICATION SITE IMPROVEMENTS**  
**U.S. FOREST SERVICE**  
**CAVINESS MOUNTAIN COMMUNICATION SITE**  
**DOLORES RANGER DISTRICT**  
**MONTEZUMA COUNTY, CO**

**BACKGROUND**

Montezuma Dolores County Metropolitan Recreation District (MDCMRD) dba Southwest Colorado TV Translator Association (SWCOTV) is proposing 3 projects, over a span of 3 years, to update, improve and consolidate the facilities and infrastructure at their site at the top of the Caviness Mountain Communications Site (lot #13; lease DOL278). The project is planned for 3 years due to yearly budget constraints and the short construction season at that altitude. The project and schedule includes:

- Summer 2021: Construct a free-standing 70-foot tall tower, to replace 4 existing towers at the west-end of the site, within the footprint of the existing microwave tower and guywires, just north of the existing microwave building. Construct a building similar in size to the existing microwave building, next to the new tower
- Summer 2022: Deconstruct the existing 4 towers and old cinder block building on the west-end of the site and reclaim land to natural condition
- The work is planned for the following timeframes, but is subject to change. The main change could be that some activities may occur in 2023, if needed.

All proposed work is within the disturbed area within the communication site boundary. The 70-foot tower is shorter than the 80-foot tower already on-site, so there should be minimal impacts to avian and visual resources. All equipment for project work will be able to access the site using the existing access road. Road maintenance to facilitate the equipment is not anticipated, but if it is needed, a Road Use Permit will be issued by the San Juan National Forest Engineering Staff.

The site is located approximately 5 miles northeast of Mancos Hill/U.S. Highway 160 on Forest Service Route 316 (Caviness Mountain Communications Site (lot #13; lease DOL278). See attached vicinity map and Exhibit A.

**DECISION**

I have decided to authorize the proposed special use as described above.

This action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement (EIS) or an environmental assessment (EA). The applicable category of actions is identified in agency procedures as Approval, modification, or continuation of minor special uses of NFS

lands that require less than five acres of contiguous acres of land. This category of action is applicable because it allows for approving an additional telecommunication use at a site already used for such purposes, which is the case for the SWCOTV special use application.

I find that there are no extraordinary circumstances that would warrant further analysis and documentation in an EA or EIS. I took into account resource conditions identified in agency procedures that should be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances might exist:

- Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species – this proposal will not affect any aquatic or terrestrial proposed, threatened, endangered, Forest Service sensitive species, their habitat, or their designated or proposed critical habitat.
- Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds – the proposed project area is not located within a municipal watershed or within a flood plain and does not contain wetlands.
- Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas – the proposed project area is not located within a designated wilderness, wilderness study area of national recreation area.
- Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas – the proposed project is not located within an inventoried roadless area or potential wilderness area.
- Research natural areas – the proposed project area is not located within a research natural area.
- American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites – the proposed project area does not contain known American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites.
- Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas – no archaeological sites, historic properties or areas were identified in the proposed project area. The Colorado Historic Preservation Office has concurred with this finding.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

This action was listed as a proposal on the San Juan National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions. No comments were received regarding the proposed activities.

## **FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

This decision is consistent with the San Juan National Forest Land Management Plan. The project was designed in conformance with general direction for Communication Sites (page 140 including use of existing sites when the proposed changes are compatible with existing uses.

The Proposed Action would be in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act and the Endangered Species Act, as summarized above.

## ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW (APPEAL) OPPORTUNITIES

This decision is not subject to administrative appeal or objection processes pursuant to the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 and the Agricultural Act of 2014.

## IMPLEMENTATION DATE

The project is planned for implementation in Fall 2020.

## CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact: Lew Sovocool, Lands and Realty Specialist, Columbine Ranger District, 367 S. Pearl Street, Bayfield, CO 81122; (970) 884-1433.



Derek Padilla

District Ranger

10/21/2020  
Date

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